Basic information

2021/2109(DEC) DEC - Discharge procedure	Procedure completed
2020 discharge: General budget of the EU - Court of Justice **Subject** 8.70.03.10 2020 discharge	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
CONT Budgetary Control	GARCÍA MUÑOZ Isabel (S&D)	12/07/2021
	Shadow rapporteur LENAERS Jeroen (EPP) STRUGARIU Ramona (Renew) PEKSA Mikuláš (Greens/EFA) KUHS Joachim (ID) FLANAGAN Luke Ming (The Left)	

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
AFET Foreign Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
DEVE Development	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
INTA International Trade	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
BUDG Budgets	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
ECON Economic and Monetary Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
EMPL Employment and Social Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	

ENVI Environment, Public Health and Food Safety	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
ITRE Industry, Research and Energy	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
IMCO Internal Market and Consumer Protection	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
TRAN Transport and Tourism	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
REGI Regional Development	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
AGRI Agriculture and Rural Development	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
PECH Fisheries	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
CULT Culture and Education	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
JURI Legal Affairs	LEBRETON Gilles (ID)	14/10/2021
LIBE Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
AFCO Constitutional Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
FEMM Women's Rights and Gender Equality	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
PETI Petitions	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	

European Commission

Commission DG	Commissioner
Budget	HAHN Johannes

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
30/06/2021	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(2021)0381	Summary
14/09/2021	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
28/02/2022	Vote in committee		
28/03/2022	Committee report tabled for plenary	A9-0066/2022	
04/05/2022	Decision by Parliament	T9-0147/2022	Summary
04/05/2022	Debate in Parliament		
05/10/2022	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2021/2109(DEC)
Procedure type	DEC - Discharge procedure
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	CONT/9/06523

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee opinion	JURI	PE699.028	03/12/2021	
Committee draft report		PE699.024	17/12/2021	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE703.194	01/02/2022	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A9-0066/2022	28/03/2022	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T9-0147/2022	04/05/2022	Summary

Council of the EU

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Supplementary non-legislative basic document	06001/2022	03/03/2022	

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	COM(2021)0381	30/06/2021	Summary

Other institutions and bodies

Institution/body	Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
CofA	Court of Auditors: opinion, report	N9-0043/2022 OJ C 430 25.10.2021, p. 0007	25/10/2021	

Additional information		
Source	**Document**	**Date**
European Commission	EUR-Lex	

Meetings with interest representatives published in line with the Rules of Procedure

Rapporteurs, Shadow Rapporteurs and Committee Chairs

Transparency				
Name	**Role**	**Committee**	**Date**	**Interest representatives**
STRUGARIU Ramona	Shadow rapporteur	CONT	19/10/2020	Court of Justice of the EU

Final act
Budget 2022/1699 OJ L 258 05.10.2022, p. 0084

2020 discharge: General budget of the EU - Court of Justice

2021/2109(DEC) - 30/06/2021 - Non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE: presentation by the Commission of the consolidated annual accounts of the European Union for the financial year 2020, as part of the 2020 discharge procedure.

Analysis of the accounts of the EU Institutions: European Court of Justice

The consolidated annual accounts of the EU provide financial information on the activities of the institutions, agencies and other bodies of the EU from an accrual accounting and budgetary perspective. They are prepared according to the highest available international public sector standards.

The discharge is a Parliament decision that reflects its conclusions at the end of a process, the discharge procedure, on the way the Commission (and other institutions and bodies) has carried out its task of implementing the EU budget.

The decision is based in particular on the European Court of Auditors reports, in particular its annual report, in which the Court provides a Statement of Assurance (DAS) on the legality and regularity of transactions (payments and commitments).

Implementation of the Court of Justice's appropriations for the financial year 2020

The expenditure appropriations entered in the Court's budget for the financial year 2020 amounted to **EUR 436 637 500**.

The implementation of the budget for the financial year 2020 amounts to **EUR 432 086 272** and reflects an increased rate of use of the final appropriations of 99%, which is slightly higher than in 2019 (98.7%).

Almost 75% of the appropriations used by the Court in 2020 are dedicated to the expenditure of Members and staff, with almost all of the remaining balance relating to expenditure on infrastructure, in particular in the areas of buildings and IT.

The Court's activities in 2020 were marked by:

- the impact of the Covid-19 health crisis that significantly influenced all of the Institution’s activity, both jurisdictional and administrative;

- lockdown measures and restrictions had a certain impact on social and economic activity and on that of the courts of the Member States, leading to a drop in the number of cases lodged with **1 582 cases** brought overall before the two courts of the European Union, that figure is lower than the record number of cases seen in the previous year (1 905) but similar to the figures for 2018 (1 683) and 2017 (1 656);

- the average length of proceedings for cases completed before both courts stands at **15.4 months**, the lowest level ever achieved, which demonstrates the constant pursuit of the objective of improving efficiency in the management of proceedings;

- additional costs were noted such as the purchase of IT equipment and services due to the generalised use of homeworking for staff, and for the purchase of disinfection and personal protective equipment for Members and staff of the Court that are called into the buildings, for the representatives of parties, and for visitors;

- however, **savings** were made on several budget lines, in particular on those relating to translation and freelance interpretation, professional training, missions, cleaning and security and surveillance of the buildings, furniture and to protocol-related activities;

- an estimated saving of EUR 5.5 million was made regarding the adjustment of salaries.

2020 discharge: General budget of the EU - Court of Justice

2021/2109(DEC) - 04/05/2022 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament decided by 548 votes to 51, with 7 abstentions, to **grant discharge** to the Registrar of the Court of Justice in respect of the implementation of the budget of the Court of Justice of the European Union for the financial year 2020.

Parliament was pleased to note that the Court of Auditors found **no significant weaknesses** in its audit of the areas of human resources and public procurement for the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU). Based on its audit work, the Court concluded that the payments for the administrative expenditure of the Institutions, including the CJEU, for the financial year 2020 were, taken as a whole, **free from material error**. The Court found no specific problems with the regularity of transactions.

In its resolution, adopted by 573 votes to 45 with 19 abstentions, Parliament made the following observations.

Budgetary and financial management

In 2020, the budget of the CJEU amounted to **EUR 436.6 million** (EUR 429.5 million in 2019 and EUR 410 million in 2018). The budget implementation rate for the year 2020 was high (99%, slightly higher than the rate of 98.7% achieved in 2019). Almost 75% of the appropriations used by the CJEU in 2020 were spent on Members' and staff-related expenditure, with almost the entire remaining balance allocated to infrastructure-related expenditure, including buildings and IT (over 25%).

The COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on the budget of the CJEU. Additional costs were incurred for the purchase of IT equipment due to the widespread teleworking of staff, as well as personal protective equipment (PPE) and disinfectant. Savings were made on several budget lines (translation, freelance interpretation, professional training, missions, buildings and furniture, protocol, meetings and conferences).

The additional expenditure related to the COVID-19 pandemic for the year 2020 amounted to EUR 3 million and the savings to EUR 8.5 million, which means that the net savings can be estimated at EUR 5.5 million.

Parliament noted that the overall gender ratio (61% women and 39% men) remained unchanged in 2020 compared to 2019. It commended the CJEU for the measures it has taken to promote gender equality, such as mentoring and talent management, and to encourage women to apply for senior and middle management positions.

Internal management, performance, internal control

According to the report on the functioning of the General Court, the reform of the Union's judicial architecture was necessary to reduce both the volume of pending cases and the excessive length of proceedings. Members noted that the analysis contained in the report highlighted some positive trends, such as (i) a significant reduction in the length of proceedings, (ii) a more thorough investigation of cases and (iii) more frequent referrals of cases to the extended chamber formations.

Parliament welcomed the fact that the CJEU managed to maintain a high level of productivity despite the COVID-19 pandemic. It noted a slight decrease in the number of cases pending before the CJEU but an increase in the number of cases pending before the General Court (1 497 cases as of 31 December 2020 compared to 1 398 as of 31 December 2019). The average duration of proceedings, both at the Court of Justice and the General Court, was 15.4 months in 2020.

Human resources, equality and staff well-being

Parliament took note of the very high occupation rate of posts in the ECJ's establishment plan, i.e. around **97% in 2020**. At the end of 2020, there were 2 239 members of staff (60% officials, 32% temporary agents and 8% contract agents) were in post.

Reiterating the importance of addressing the lack of gender balance in the college of judges, Members called on the President of the General Court to draw the attention of the governments of the Member States to the importance of ensuring gender balance in the appointments at the time of partial renewal of the General Court.

Parliament welcomed the additional measures adopted in 2020 to improve staff welfare during the COVID-19 pandemic. It welcomed the support provided by the CJEU's medical service to staff members affected by burnout, as well as the recruitment of a psychologist in 2019 to actively support staff in difficulty. It also welcomed the organisation of staff awareness-raising events on equal opportunities, diversity and inclusion issues.

Ethical framework and transparency

Parliament welcomed the report presented to the Parliament's Committee on Budgetary Control on the **prevention of conflicts of interest** among the Members of the CJEU. The declaration of interests of members plays a key role in the prevention regime and the code of conduct adopted in 2021 has increased the content of the declaration of interests.

Members reaffirmed the importance of adopting a **revised general code of conduct** for staff members. The CJEU is also invited to launch surveys concerning staff awareness on the ethical framework and whistleblower procedures.

Digital transition, cyber security, data protection

MEPs welcomed the deployment of human, technical and financial resources to design and implement a uniform and secure video-conferencing system, with potential simultaneous interpretation for the 24 official languages, for the benefit of representatives of parties who cannot travel to Luxembourg due to travel restrictions in the Member States.

Parliament reiterated its concerns about the human rights implications of the use of **artificial intelligence** (AI) in the judiciary systems. Tasks performed with AI should always be monitored and resolved by a human operator. The CJEU should inform the Parliament about the operators of the AI tools used.

Lastly, Members considered that the CJEU had adopted all relevant measures to (i) protect its staff during the COVID-19 pandemic, (ii) reduce the risk of burnout (including through webinar sessions on work-life management topics), (iii) raise awareness of the right to disconnect and the risk of over-performance and (iv) monitor the situation.